

Message Text

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SUBJ: NORWEGIAN CANDIDATE FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - UN WORLD
FOOD COUNCIL (WFC)

REF: STATE 39798

1. NORWEGIAN CANDIDATE FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WFC LASSE
AASLAND (PHONETIC: OHS LAHN) HAS HAD A LONG CAREER IN AND
AROUND LABOR PARTY POLITICS AND THE NORWEGIAN CIVIL SERVICE.
EDUCATED AS A LAWYER, HE WAS VERY ACTIVE IN THE LABOR YOUTH
MOVEMENT AND SERVED ON THE MOVEMENT'S EXECUTIVE BOARD IN THE
LATE 1950. . HIS EARLY GOVERNMENT SERVICE IN THE 50S WAS
WITH THE MINISTRIES OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE. FROM
1956-1962 HE SERVED AS SPECIAL POLITICAL SECRETARY TO THEN
PRIME MINISTER GEHARDSSEN. LATER HE WORKED WITH THE
WAGE AND PRICE ADMINISTRATION AND IN 1963 HE BEGAN HIS LONG
ASSOCIATION WITH THE NORWEGIAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT (NORAD).

2. WHILE A NORAD HE SERVED AS DIRECTOR OF THE NORWEGIAN
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PEACE CORPS (1963-66), SERVED AS NORWEGIAN RESIDEN REPRE-
SENTATIVE IN UGANDA FROM 1968-71, AND AS NORAD'S LEGAL OFFICE
DIRECTOR IN 1972-73. IN VARIOUS LEAVES OF ABSENCE FROM NORAD,
AASLAND SERVED AS ASSISTANT UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE
IN PAKISTAN (1966-68), UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNI-
CATIONS (1971-72), AND BRIEFLY AS UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
DEFENSE (1974-75) (BOTH HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS).

HE HAS LATELY BEEN A NORAD DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND PRESENTLY HEADS UP ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL DEPARTMENT.

3. OVER THE SPAN OF HIS CAREER, AASLAND HAS HELD POSITIONS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY. IN HIS UNDERSECRETARY POSITIONS HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DAY-TO-DAY RUNNING OF CABINET DEPARTMENTS. IN HIS PRESENT POSITION WITH NORAD HE NOT ONLY SUPERVISES A SUBSTANTIAL OSLO-BASED STAFF BUT IS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF NORWEGIAN OVERSEAS MISSIONS IN A SCORE OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE NORAD BUDGET -- TOTALLING SOME \$400 MILLION IN ALL -- IS ALSO ONE OF HIS MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES.

4. COMMENT: IN EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT, AASLAND WOULD BE EXTREMELY WELL-QUALIFIED TO FILL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION. HE HAS LONG BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS, BOTH IN OSLO AND IN THE FIELD, AND WOULD COME TO THE JOB WITH A GREAT DEAL OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL EXPERIENCE AS WELL. (HE IS VERY CLOSE TO THE CURRENT LABORY PARTY LEADERSHIP.) DURING HIS DAYS WITH THE NORWEGIAN PEACE CORPS HE WAS A FREQUENT VISITOR TO THIS EMBASSY AND HE ENJOYED A GOOD REPUTATION AMONG EMBASSY OFFICERS THEN. AASLAND VISITED THE U.S. AT LEAST TWICE IN OFFICIAL CAPACITIES -- IN 1963 TO ATTEND THE WASHINGTON WORKSHOP OF THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE CORPS SECRETARIAT AND AGAIN IN 1974 AS UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE. AASLAND IS KNOWN TO BE A GOOD ADMINISTRATOR, HAS BEEN CHARACTERIZED AS A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOOD POLITICAL OPERATOR,
AND SPEAKS FLUENT ENGLISH.
LERNER

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NNN

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